

## [Letter from Woody Guthrie, ca. Fall 1940]

I made this song up one day when I was hitchhiking down the road out of Reno — the biggest and little city in the world. You see lots of hitch hikers out the Reno road, they get hitched somewhere else and they hike to Reno. I won \$15 on a gambling wheel and lost my reputation. The judge charged me with vacancy and I laid in jail overnight. Virginia City, Carson City, Las Vegas, and Reno, and all over the gold fields — Ive hiked and I've rambled and gambled and otherwise managed to stay broke. Reno's a good town well done. Reno went into the divorce business and has caused more marriages than any other town its size. Reno's just twice as big as it would be if it was only half as big as it is. I meet an indian there that had found an oil pool in the river bottom and he come to town to celebrate and he lost his ford, his dog, and his son and he smoked up two packs of my tobacco a trying to recollect where all of it was. But back to the song — its the tale of a Philadelphia lawyer that went to Reno to make good — and he fell in love with a girl from Hollywood who was in love with a cowboy from Nevada — and tonight back in old Pennsylvania amongst her beautiful pines — theres one less Philadelphia lawyer in old Philadelphia tonight. But RENO aint no different from other towns, you can lose a hundred dollars before you get around the block. I bought me an ice cream cone the night I hit Reno and I stood out there on the streets under them street lgiths and neon signs, I reckon I stood out there till almost nine o'clock. This is just some little recollections about Reno that I'm jotting down here in Columbias new fangled stuidio building in New York while we're a putting on a dress rehearsal — we just hearse and rehearse, dress and undress in this show business — and all of hte boys and girls are having fun and hearsing around — we put on a program up here in this studio not long ago called Forecast #10, Back Where I Come From. Back where I come from there aint not nobody got time to forecast. Up here at CBS they tear the stages down so fast it looks like an orchestration of a sleight of hand rot. They use different size stages for different sized orchestras. A one man band would perform from an apple box I suppose. Mikes hanging around like apples on an orange

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tree, some of them stand up on the floor and there's so many mikes you feel like you're a broadcasting out of a cane patch. I put on my first four programs over the wrong mikes. It takes you some little time to catch on but that's all right the engineer never knows which mike is on and which one is off. We broadcasted the first half o this program with a new technician in the booth and he throwed the wrong switch and the program went out over a back wire fence. We singers sounded a little raspy. theres so many horns and fiddles in this orchestra that you cant think — but on the radio you dont have to. Woody Guthrie

Return to: W Guthrie Up floor 31 East 21 Street New York City

To: McIntosh & Otis 18 E. 41 Street New York City

18 East Forty First Street

Its like a big long string of corn on the road — if one of them gets afraid and stops it holds up the whole bunch —

Ree Novak - Apt. 5B 242 E. 19 St. GR.7-0264 After Oct. 1

Party at 41 Horatio 1st Bell lowest bell Freilich